

Message Text

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(C) SEOUL 10209 280921Z DEC 76
(D) SEOUL 10210 280946Z DEC 76

SUMMARY. DECEMBER 29 PRESS COVERAGE OF ROKG ANNOUNCEMENTS
CONTINUES TO FOLLOW PATTERN ESTABLISHED DECEMBER 28,
REFLECTING GOVERNMENT VIEW THAT PROBLEMS LARGELY SOLVED.
EDITORIALS STRESS IMPORTANCE MAINTAINING CLOSE KOREAN-
AMERICAN TIES. END SUMMARY.

1. ON DECEMBER 29, BOTH MORNING VERNACULAR NEWSPAPERS
DEVOTED LARGE HEADLINES AND TOP COVERAGE TO GOVERNMENT
ANNOUNCEMENTS CONCERNING THREE "PENDING PROBLEMS" BETWEEN
ROK AND US. COVERAGE AND TREATMENT WERE ESSENTIALLY THE
SAME AS IN YESTERDAY'S AFTERNOON PAPERS (REF D), WITH
MAJOR EMPHASIS GIVEN TO STATEMENT OF FOREIGN MINISTER AND
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PRIME MINISTER'S BRIEFING BEFORE PEACEFUL UNIFICATION
COUNCIL OF NATIONAL ASSEMBLY. PAPERS THUS REFLECTED
GOVERNMENT VIEW THAT THESE PROBLEMS ARE ALMOST SOLVED.
BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS GIVEN ON INSIDE PAGES INCLUDES
FULL TEXT OF FOREIGN MINISTER'S STATEMENT (REFTEL A), AS
WELL AS BACKGROUND MATERIAL (REF B). WHILE THE LATTER

MATERIAL RAISES QUESTIONS AND EXPRESSES SOME DISSATISFACTION ABOUT US ACTION IN BUGGING AND KIM SANG-GUN CASES, THE STRONGER EXPRESSIONS OF SUSPICION CONTAINED IN REF B ARE OMITTED AND THE DISSATISFACTION IS CLEARLY SUBORDINATED IN THE OVERALL COVERAGE.

2. AFTERNOON PAPERS DECEMBER 29 CARRY ON FRONT PAGES ONLY BRIEF ITEMS PICKING UP DRP AND YUJONG-HOE REACTION (SEPTTEL) MISSED YESTERDAY. INSIDE PAGES TYPICALLY CARRY ONLY GOSSIP COLUMN COVERAGE AND EDITORIALS.

3. MORNING AND AFTERNOON NEWSPAPERS ALL CARRY EDITORIALS ON SUBJECT. EDITORIALS STRESS IMPORTANCE OF KOREAN-AMERICAN TIES AND EXPRESS BELIEF THAT THESE MUST NOT BE DISRUPTED. THEY TEND TO CONCENTRATE ON ROLE OF US PRESS IN RAISING PROBLEMS AND ENLARGING THEM AND URGE GREATER RESPONSIBILITY ON PART OF US PAPERS, IN VIEW OF INFLUENCE ON BILATERAL RELATIONS OF THEIR REPORTING. SEVERAL EDITORIALS CONTAINED BITTER PERSONAL ATTACKS ON KIM SANG-GUN AND/OR PAK TONG-SON. MOST EDITORIALS POINTED OUT POSSIBILITY FOR CONTINUED US PRESS ATTENTION TO DEVELOPMENTS IN PAK TONG-SON CASE AND CALLED FOR CONTINUED RATIONALITY AND AVOIDANCE OF EMOTION IN TREATING THESE ISSUES. OVERALL THEME WAS REFLECTED IN CONCLUSION OF TONGA ILBO PIECE, WHICH CALLED FOR "NORMALIZATION OF KOREAN-AMERICAN RELATIONS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE."
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